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ABSTRACT

Volunteerism has existed for centuries, but formalized volunteer programs have come about only recently. Student volunteerism became popular during the 1960s and 1970s as colleges and universities encouraged community service through campus-based programs. This study examined college student volunteers (N=199) from four different campus volunteer organizations with regard to Holland type and motivational needs. Subjects responded to the Adjective Checklist in which subjects picked adjectives they perceived as describing themselves and the Self-Directed Search which measured personality/occupational typologies. The results of the tests indicated that there were differences among the groups of volunteers and between volunteers and non-volunteers. People and environments both have characteristic "personalities," and individuals seek environments in which they can express their strengths, values, and primary characteristics. Through a better understanding of characteristics and motivations of individuals who volunteer, programs can be better designed to recruit and retain volunteers. (ABL)

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Marie T. Sergent and William E. Sedlacek

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One hundred ninety-nine student volunteers from four different campus volunteer organizations were studied with regard to Holland type and motivational needs. The hypothesis that student volunteers would differ by organization was supported, suggesting that volunteers may seek environments which best match their own personal characteristics. The practical and research implications of these results were discussed.

Volunteerism has existed for centuries, but formalized volunteer programs have come about only recently (Ellis, 1985). Student volunteerism became popular during the 1960's and 1970's, as colleges and universities encouraged community service through campus-based programs (Ellis, 1978). Henderson (1985) has defined a volunteer as "someone who contributes services without financial gain to a functional subcommunity or cause" (p. 31). There has, however, been a recent decline in volunteer involvement on college campuses. It has been reported that 29% of college students had volunteered for a charity organization and 40% had become involved in fund raising activities during their educational experience (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1984). These numbers may seem high, but they represent a decline in volunteer participation from earlier years. Newman (1985) suggested that this decline may be due, in part, to societal and individual trends toward egocentrism and self-development. Henderson (1985) argued that social and economic forces are increasingly making volunteerism a luxury which can only be undertaken by the wealthy. She further suggested that "the days of altruism may be over" (p. 32), and hypothesized that people are now seeking growth and self-satisfaction from their volunteer experiences, in addition to the more traditionally-hypothesized motivations of helping others.

There have been recent attempts in higher education to increase the involvement of students in volunteer activities, and to increase the quality of their experiences. These efforts have, in part, been founded on 1) the importance attributed to the services made available through volunteer commitment; 2) the

finding that involvement in campus activities contributes to student development (Astin, 1985); and 3) the apparent positive relationship between campus involvement and overall retention rates for students in higher education (Astin, 1977; Mallinckrodt & Sedlacek, 1987).

One way in which student personnel administrators have attempted to increase volunteer involvement is through clarifying the reasons why people volunteer. Traditionally, volunteer motivations were assumed to be altruistic. This view of volunteers influenced the way in which volunteer programs were designed, operated, and studied. Recently, however, researchers and writers alike have focused on additional motivations that cause people to volunteer. Henderson (1980) suggested that each volunteer has unique motivations and expectations of his or her experience. Ascertaining these can contribute to providing volunteers with a satisfactory experience.

In her study of 4-H volunteers, Henderson (1981) found that the primary motivation for adult volunteers was affiliation, or the desire to interact with others. These individuals construed their volunteer involvement to be a leisure activity. A recent study of college students volunteering for community service determined that they were motivated to volunteer by both altruistic and egoistic needs (Fitch, 1987). As a result of these findings, Fitch concluded his study by suggesting that volunteer program directors might wish to keep social exchange theory in mind when organizing and supervising their programs. Social exchange theory suggests that people contribute to the

degree that they perceive that they are being rewarded. When an imbalance between contributions and rewards is perceived, an individual is likely to move toward a greater equilibrium. An individual who perceives that the rewards for volunteering are imbalanced with their volunteer contributions is likely to discontinue involvement. Thus, Fitch (1987) introduced the empirical study of volunteerism as a source of need fulfillment as well as an altruistic activity.

Research and a move toward greater conceptual complexity in understanding volunteers are positive steps toward recruiting additional volunteers and providing them with satisfactory experiences. However, one flaw of previous conceptualizations and studies of volunteers is that they have tended to focus their efforts on only one volunteer organization, generalizing from those results to other organizations and volunteers. Person-environment fit theory (c.f., Holland, 1985), however, suggests that individuals in diverse organizations would have different personal characteristics, which would make generalizing from one organization to all volunteers misleading. The possibility that volunteers in different organizations are very different types of people has implications for volunteer recruitment and retention.

Holland (1985) has found extensive evidence for his theory that both people and environments can be represented by characteristic types, and that the greater the type consistency between the individual and her environments, the more satisfied the individual. There are six types which characterize both individuals and environments; they are summarized in Table 1. Holland's theory postulates that people will search for

environments that will allow them to utilize their skills and abilities and to express their attitudes and values; social people will seek social environments, while investigative people will seek investigative environments.

In a second person-environment theory, developed by Murray (1938), it is predicted that individuals seek situations that will fulfill their needs. Murray's theory contains 15 individual motivations, such as the needs for Achievement, Autonomy, Order, and Deference. Murray hypothesized that people are compelled to act in such a way as to satisfy their needs; this drive is a "motivation".

Henderson (1980) hypothesized that volunteers may be motivated by a variety of motivational needs. She suggested that an understanding of volunteer motivations can be put to use in recruiting volunteers that will be most satisfied with the organization, and will be likely to volunteer again. While having clear heuristic and practical value, Henderson's hypotheses have not been adequately tested.

A second flaw of previous research on motivations is that non-standardized measures have typically been developed to study volunteers, which makes unclear the reliability and validity of study results. One notable exception is a study conducted which compared the motivations of volunteers from two organizations utilizing standardized measures (Quade, 1986). In this study, Henderson's (1980) hypotheses were confirmed: volunteers in two different organizations were found to vary in their motivations for volunteering and in their personal characteristics, as

measured by Holland type. Several problems in that study however, limited the generalizability of the results. These included a small sample size (N = 81 from two organizations), low return rate (42%), and the sampling of only two organizations, which may have introduced sampling bias into the study. Finally, Quade's study did not compare the volunteer group to a control group of college students.

The purposes of the current study were to 1) test the hypothesis that volunteers in diverse organizations will have different motivations and personal characteristics (four organizations were selected for this purpose); and 2) investigate whether the motivational characteristics of volunteers and non-volunteer students are different.

Method

Participants. The study was conducted at a large eastern university. Through an original visit to organization meetings or with organization leaders, followed by a rigorous mailing procedure, a 73% rate of participation was achieved. Participants were 199 volunteers from 4 different volunteer groups that were chosen for the purposes of this study. Group A (Program Board) is a large programming board of a student union. Through the operation of 9 autonomous subcommittees, volunteers in this group are responsible for planning and implementing a large budget and for planning and approving student programs. The time commitment required by this organization tends to be high. Group B (Recruitment) is a large volunteer group affiliated with the undergraduate admissions office. Their purpose is to aid in recruiting new students to the university.

They staff programs such as student and family tours of the university and a "buddy system" in which potential students are paired with current university students for a day. This is a very formal group receiving a high degree of structure and supervision from its parent organization. Volunteers in this organization are required to commit less time than do those in other groups in the study. Group C (Peer Counselors) volunteers operate and staff an on-campus peer counseling, referral, and telephone hotline service. This group is supervised by the campus counseling center. Group D (Service Fraternity) is a co-ed service fraternity whose purpose is to provide charity services to the campus and to the greater community. Examples of their programs include visits to local nursing homes and blood drives. This group has a fairly formal structure and meets biweekly, but it is not an independently housed fraternity.

Instruments.

The Adjective Checklist (ACL; Gough & Heilbrun, 1983) is a measure of Murray's (1938) 15 hypothesized needs. It is comprised of 300 adjectives, and participants check those adjectives which they perceive as being descriptive of themselves. Norms have been developed for college students, and evidence of the validity of the ACL has been established (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983). The inernal consistency of the subscales ranges from .53 to .95, with a median of .94.

Self-Directed Search (SDS; Holland, 1985) is a measure of the personality/occupational typology described by Holland (1985). The Occupational Daydreams section of the SDS has the most

predictive validity of all SDS scales, and has been used in isolation to determine Holland typology (Holland, 1963; O'Neil, Magoon, & Tracey, 1978). In this section, participants are requested to identify their current and past occupational choices, from which Holland types (high-point codes) are inferred. It was used in this study because of its validity and ease of administration. High point codes were assigned on the basis of the most recent occupational choice.

Analyses. Data were analyzed using chi square, t tests, and multivariate analysis of covariance. All analyses were conducted at the .05 level of significance.

Results

Volunteer demographics: The participants in this study were predominantly female (60%) and white (82%). There were no race or gender differences in the volunteers between the 4 organizations. Sixty-one percent of the volunteers were juniors or seniors, and participants had been volunteering with their organizations for a mean of 2.52 semesters (median = 2.00 semesters; mode = 1.00 semester).

Holland Codes: A chi square analysis of Holland high point code by organization was conducted to test the hypothesis that volunteers in the 4 organizations would be different in type. The chi-square statistic was significant ($X^2 = 51.95$, $p < .001$), indicating that there were differences in Holland type between organizations. While there was a variety of types in each organization, Groups A (Program Board) and D (Service Fraternity) can be best characterized by the Investigative type, Group B (Recruitment) by the Enterprising type, and Group C (Peer

Counselors) by the Social type (see Table 2).

Motivational Needs: A multivariate analysis of covariance was conducted to test the hypothesis that volunteers in different organizations would be motivated by different needs. The covariance due to the number of adjectives checked by participants was partialed out due to its spurious correlation with several ACL subscales (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983). Pairwise comparisons of subscale raw score means were conducted in post hoc analyses using t tests.

There were significant differences between the 4 organizations in motivational needs (see Table 3). Group B, representing the Recruitment volunteers, was significantly higher than the other groups on needs for achievement, endurance, order, nurturance, affiliation, and heterosexuality. This group was also higher than the Program Board and Peer Counselor volunteers in the need for dominance, higher than the Program Board group on intraception and abasement, and higher than Peer Counselor volunteers on exhibition. Service Fraternity volunteers were higher than Program Board on needs for achievement, dominance, endurance, order, intraception, nurturance, affiiation, heterosexuality, and exhibition. Peer Counselors were higher than Recruitment volunteers in need for succorance and abasement, while the Program Board group was higher than Recruitment volunteers on succorance. The Program Board volunteers were also higher than the Service Fraternity group on need for succorance.

Finally, a series of t-tests were conducted to assess

whether the volunteers in the study differed from the norms reported for college students in the ACL Manual (Gough & Heilbrun, 1983) on the 15 motivational need subscales. Significant differences were found on 7 of the 15 subscales. Volunteers were significantly higher than the normative group on the heterosexuality, exhibition, autonomy, and change scales. They were lower than the normative group in assessed needs for endurance, order, and affiliation.

Discussion

The results of this study confirmed the hypotheses that a) volunteers would differ from a sample of non-volunteers; and b) volunteers in diverse organizations would have different characteristics and individual motivations, as indicated by their differences in Murray's (1938) motivational need categories and in Holland (1985) high point codes. First, volunteers in this study differed from other students in motivational needs, as suggested by the differences in ACL scores of the current sample and the normative sample of the ACL. There are limitations to this comparison, however. These differences may be attributable to differences between volunteer and non-volunteer students, or may be due to the difference in the samples. These possibilities might be explored in future studies by using a control group more closely matched with the volunteer group.

The volunteers in this study also differed according to organizational membership, as well. The volunteers involved in peer counseling had more Social types than the other groups. These volunteers were also found to have higher motivational needs in areas that would suggest a greater emphasis on group

decision-making and deference to the needs of others. Recruitment volunteers were predominantly Enterprising and Social, and were highest in motivations which reflected needs for independence, autonomy, affiliation, and achievement. The Service Fraternity had the greatest number of volunteers with an Investigative type, while the Program Board reflected the greatest diversity in Holland codes. The diversity of this latter group is probably best explained by the nature of the organization, which is organized into many autonomous subgroups, providing a variety of environments for volunteers.

It is suggested in person-environment theory that people and environments both have characteristic "personalities", and that individuals will seek environments in which they can express their strengths, values, and primary characteristics (Holland, 1985). The results of this study suggest that this principle operates in volunteer organizations. First, volunteers differed from other students in their motivational needs. Additionally, the hypothesis that volunteers cannot be considered a unitary group, but rather, vary systematically from one organizational environment to the next, was confirmed. This provides further support for Quade's (1986) finding that volunteers in different organizations may differ in systematic ways. These results have several implications for volunteer programs in higher education.

One practical use of these findings is in the recruitment of new volunteers. Locating volunteers who are likely to succeed in the particular environment represented by an organization will increase the likelihood that they will remain with the group.

Wilson (1976) has argued that social programs tend to fail because of a lack of appropriate management and an oversimplified view of individual motivations. An organization that is aware of the characteristics and motivations of volunteers that are likely to succeed and fit well into the organization can target their recruitment efforts toward these students (Henderson, 1980. The first step in this effort is to assess the goals, objectives, and structure of the organization. An organization that provides a great deal of structure and guidance might appeal most to people who are high in motivational needs for Order, or who have Holland high-point codes of Conventional or Investigative. A more informal organization that values group consensus and decision-making might be a better fit for more people with a high point code of Social or high motivational needs for Abasement or Affiliation. Conversely, an organization that is interested in increasing the diversity of its volunteers might incorporate additional types of task and reward structures to attract these individuals. Clarity about the structure and goals of the organization is invaluable in creating this match.

The results of the study also have practical implications for the retention of volunteers. According to person-environment fit theory, it is reasonable that a better match between individual characteristics and motivations on one hand, and organizational structure and rewards on the other, would tend to result in a longer tenure for volunteers in the organization. An organization can maximize this fit for its volunteers by considering the nature of volunteer tasks as well as the type of rewards that are offered. Social exchange theory, mentioned by

Fitch (1987) in the context of volunteer organizations, is one example of this application. Fitch found that volunteers had both altruistic and egoistic reasons for volunteering, and he suggested that providing rewards for volunteers may be the key to increasing the quality and quantity of volunteer involvement. The current study provides further information about achieving these goals by understanding various volunteer characteristics and motivations, and by determining the specific types of rewards that would appeal to various types of volunteers. For example, a volunteer with a Holland type of Social might feel most rewarded by interacting directly with the consumers of the service. A good service reward for this group might involve an informal "social" to honor and celebrate their contributions. On the other hand, volunteers with a high point code of Enterprising might feel more rewarded by a formal recognition of their achievements in the organization. Reward ceremonies and certificates of achievement might best reinforce these individuals. Volunteer retention efforts can be enhanced by altering the organization's task and reward structure to better meet the needs and characteristics of the volunteers.

Finally, the results of the studyhave implications for future research involving volunteers. Most studies concerning volunteers and their characteristics or motivations have utilized only one organization, and then generalize these findings to other volunteers and organizations. However, the results of this study suggest that this is an unfounded generalization. Volunteers have many different motivations for volunteering, as

suggested by Henderson (1980). Studies involving volunteers may need to employ people from several different organizations in order that the resulting conclusions apply to a variety of volunteer organizations. Research on volunteers is in its infancy (Ellis, 1985); however, greater sophistication in the design of studies may be necessary to capture the complexities of volunteer motivation.

Through better understanding characteristics and motivations of individuals who volunteer, programs can be better designed to recruit and retain volunteers. The application of person-environment fit theories in volunteer organizations can help to maximize the experience for the organization, the volunteers, and ultimately, for the consumers of the service.

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Table 1

Summary of the Holland Personality Typology

Type	Characteristics
Realistic	Asocial, conforming, frank, practical, materialistic
Investigative	Analytical, cautious, critical, curious, independent, introspective, rational
Artistic	Expressive, imaginative, impulsive, independent, introspective, open
Social	Cooperative, friendly, helpful, idealistic, kind, sociable, warm
Enterprising	Adventurous, ambitious, agreeble, extroverted, sociable, self-confident
Conventional	Careful, conforming, methodical, orderly, practical, persistent

Table 2

Holland Types by Organization*

Holland Type	Percent of Volunteers in Organization: Group A Program Board	B Recruitment	C Peer Counseling	D Service Fraternity
Realistic	1	7	0	5
Investigative	38	14	23	43
Artistic	20	5	0	10
Social	21	26	68	14
Enterprising	19	47	9	29

*Chi square = 51.95; $p < .001$

Note. No Conventional types were found in the sample.

Table 3

Murray's Need Scores by Organization*

Needs	Groups			
	A Program Board	B Recruitment	C Peer Counseling	D Service Fraternity
Achievement		a,c,d		
Dominance		a,c		a
Endurance		a,c,d		a
Order		a,c,d		a
Intraception		a		a
Nurturance		a,c,d		a
Affiliation		a,c,d		a
Heterogeneity		a,c,d		a
Exhibition		c		a
Autonomy				
Aggression				
Change				
Succorance	b,d		b	
Abasement	d	a	b	
Deference				

Notes. All noted values significant at $p < .05$.
*a=significantly greater than Group A
b=significantly greater than Group B
c=significantly greater than Group C
d=significantly greater than Group D